

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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## Cobwebs and Bluster

IT WOULD APPEAR that one of the troubles in the Films Division of the Ministry of Information is one which has been only too common in other Government Departments during the War—a deficiency in the quality of certain members of the Civil Service personnel. In those cases where the personnel in question has already been removed it is true that recrimination would serve no good purpose. But at the time of writing the Films Division has not yet been freed of the trammels of wrongly-allocated staff. In general there would seem to be two characteristics which prevent planning and action. Firstly, the smugness of established civil servants who, by some psychological aberration, have refused to adjust themselves to the rapid tempo and the iconoclastic urgencies of a total war; this smugness, entrenched behind a barricade of precedent, procedure and prejudice, can do much to hamper, and often to prevent, the putting into action of plans which should have immediate priority over the niggling claims

of red-tape and of official hierarchies. The second characteristic has been acutely analysed by J. B. Priestley, who says, "It is the refuge of the man who hates democracy, reasonable argument, give-and-take, tolerance, patience, and a humorous equality . . . who loves bluster and swagger . . . plotting in back rooms, shouting and bullying. . . . It is not really a balanced attitude of mind at all. It belongs to those people who cannot find their way out of adolescence, who are really overgrown, self-tormenting schoolboys, who may be middle-aged, but are really at heart so many Dead End Kids."

## The Need for Action

THE CHARACTERISTICS outlined above have done a great deal to stultify any reasonable efforts at progress on the part of the more enlightened members of the Films Division of the Ministry of Information. And as long as this "Sixth Column" remains—however small numerically—nothing that Messrs Duff-Cooper or Harold Nicolson may do or



order will have any practical effect. The barricades of procedure and precedent must be blown up without delay; and any persons who tally with Priestley's analysis must be moved to posts in which they are less liable to interfere with the War Effort. The law of libel naturally prevents us from amplifying further. In the meantime, the entire British Film Industry is waiting and willing to be mobilised; and for a wider view of the situation we refer our readers to our leading article. Finally, we hope that by the time this appears in print both Sir Kenneth Clark and J. L. Beddington will have been freed from the shackles which have been for too long allowed to impede their progress. Once freed, it is up to them to show their paces.

### To-day and To-morrow

THE URGENCIES of the battlefield and the shift of events inevitably lead to an *ad hoc* propaganda policy geared to the needs of the moment, and as the war situation increases in intensity, the theory behind propaganda sinks into the background. The authorities responsible for the national propaganda effort begin more and more to be satisfied if they can get something quickly on to the screens and newspapers and the radio. In fact, the scramble of contemporary events shakes the foundations of propaganda. It is time to re-affirm that no matter how desperate the war situation, the propaganda and information machine must be treated with the same seriousness as the production of shells and tanks. It is, indeed, not a second line but a first line of defence. The danger lies in the fact that propaganda and public information is an impalpable thing. We do not at first notice its absence. Even if it is present, no one can easily get an inkling into its success or failure. The work of the Ministry of Supply can be measured in terms of millions of bullets, thousands of shells, tens and hundreds of aeroplanes and tanks. The work of the Ministry of Information cannot be measured. For that reason, it is no one's business in particular to see that it carries out its essential work efficiently. The citizen and the newspaper can easily and successfully protest at a shortage of shells; they cannot so easily point out a wrong line of propaganda.

### The Importance of Road Shows

IF THE INTENSIFICATION of the war causes either the compulsory closing of cinemas in certain areas, or, for that matter, a fall in audience figures sufficient to put some houses out of business, there is much importance to be attached to the use of travelling cinema vans. A big fleet of these, constantly touring the country, could supply weekly and up-to-date films of an informational or morale nature to the population. If these vans were properly supplied with new and up-to-date material, much of which could be designed from the non-theatrical viewpoint, their value would be very great. Have any plans been made?

### Evacuation?

WE HOPE that there is also a plan on the files of the Films Division for keeping film production machinery in being should conditions arise which render production in London difficult or impossible. The production of films to give essential

information to the public in visual terms, and to sustain morale, would be more than ever important under blitzkrieg conditions. An evacuation plan for a film production centre clearly should form a part of any general evacuation scheme for the Government services. To instal a complete production unit outside London would not be difficult but it would need considerable advance planning.

### "Be Careful, Girls!"

ATTACHED TO the newsreels exhibited during the week ending June 15th was a short film instructing the public what to do in the event of meeting an incendiary bomb. We are shown a little cylinder, which we are told is an incendiary bomb; its fall on a house is staged and we see a room in flames. The use of a stirrup pump is explained, and the family turns out to extinguish the incendiary bomb. We see the head of the household working the stirrup pump, expressing boredom at being made to work so hard. The incendiary bomb is put out in a very few moments, and everyone is so lighthearted that we are unable to take the episode in the least seriously. We are left with the impression that an incendiary bomb is rather an exciting toy and that it is great fun to put it out. What is the good of making propaganda films at all if one cannot carry them out with taste and a sense of reality?

### Grapes Again

WE RECENTLY discussed (DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER, March) an attack on the film version of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, which appeared in *The Motion Picture Herald* (one of the most influential trade newspapers in the U.S.A.). Since then the film in question has earned full laurels; but as a postscript we record a peculiar move which took place in Hamden, Connecticut, U.S.A., and which is reported in *The Motion Picture Herald* for May 18th. It appears that after the end title of the film a short trailer was added (described as a "new, added, happy, encouraging, yet truthful ending"), suggesting to the audience that the Dust Bowl problem no longer existed.

### Stop Press

AS WE GO to press the appointment of Sidney Bernstein to the Films Division of the Ministry of Information is announced. This news has been welcomed by all sections of the film industry. Bernstein is not only an important figure as an exhibitor, but also has studied all sides of the film industry. It should also be remembered that the Film Society movement in the country owes him an incalculable debt. His appointment is the most encouraging sign of the past few months.

### Comings and Goings

ONCE AGAIN we announce changes on the Editorial Board. Paul Rotha and William Farr have both resigned, the latter to take up a post at the Films Division of the Ministry of Information. The former's absence will be keenly felt, as he did much to organise and establish DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER in its early stages. In their place we are very glad to announce that Donald Taylor and John Taylor have joined the board.



# GO TO IT!

"We have conducted our propaganda through many channels and in increasing volume, and our leaflets and other publications have amounted to many millions of copies every week. If we have to some extent hastened the end, it is due to the fact that we are a company of experts and enthusiasts, and from the outset there has been a concentration of purpose born of complete unity. . . . Ours has been a bloodless campaign and a costless one. I wish we had embarked upon it at an earlier stage of the war."

Lord Northcliffe, November 10th, 1918

"Good propaganda probably saved a year of war, and this meant the saving of thousands of millions of money and probably at least a million lives."

"The Times", October 31st, 1918

AT A MOMENT when the physical and military menace of our opponents is demanding all the physical and military concentration that the nation can achieve, it may be felt that there is no harm in continuing our policy of the last few years by letting propaganda go by default. In the urgencies of the moment, it may be said, there is not time to try and convert our propaganda machine from its gentlemanly, *laissez-faire*, and lackadaisical attitude. Nothing could be more pernicious than such a suggestion. Both Mr Duff Cooper and Mr Harold Nicolson have shown already, in a number of admirable broadcasts, that they are fully alive to the imperative necessity of redoubling and reshaping our propaganda drive. Their broadcasts are, as it were, a heartening interim report issued in the intervals of cleaning out the Augean stables of the Ministry of Information—a task in which few who have had dealings with that organisation will envy them.

It is a task which must be quickly and thoroughly carried out, and we earnestly hope that most of the Divisions will be found to be comparatively free at least of the inefficiency, muddleheadedness and bureaucratic stupidity of the Films Division. In ten months this Division has achieved a mere fraction of what it should have achieved. Its lack of imagination, no less than its abysmal failure to be even competent at its job, have been the despair of all persons in the film trade who sincerely want to place their expert abilities at the disposal of the national effort. The present situation in fact cannot continue. Either films are to be used properly on a large scale plan suited to the extreme urgency of the moment; or the Films Division should close down immediately before it wastes any more public money.

There are few people in the film business who do not believe that a proper plan could be put into operation with great rapidity. Plans of various types have been submitted by film people at regular intervals since last September. Not all of them, perhaps, were perfect; some indeed may have been stupid; but there can be no doubt that a competent department dealing with Film Propaganda could have evolved, with expert advice, a suitable working plan as long ago as last October. At the time of writing no plan worth the name has been announced.

This slowness and inefficiency would seem to be one of the many symptoms of our failure in propaganda over the last few years, particularly in comparison with Dr Goebbels' highly

successful factory of lies and perversions. The German system, organised down to the last detail, has been enormously effective both in inculcating a high and almost fanatical morale into the German people and in percolating forceful Nazi propaganda not only into neutral countries, but into our own. If Goebbels can do so well with a negative bias, how much should Britain not be able to do with a positive?

This is no place, nor perhaps is this the time, to restate the full theory of modern propaganda. But it may be pertinent to repeat the truism that modern warfare involves propaganda in three fields. Firstly, the attempt to destroy the morale of the enemy; secondly, the attempt to enlist at least the sympathy of non-belligerents; and thirdly (though by no means least importantly) to maintain morale and enlightenment on the home front.

During the war of 1914-1918 the Allies were highly successful in the first method. The quotations at the head of this article refer largely to the triumphs achieved in fomenting first uncertainty, then discontent, and finally revolution in Germany. How far our present radio propaganda, and the leaflet raids earlier in the war, are achieving a similar success it is of course impossible to estimate at the moment. But it is certain that Nazi organisation is making any such campaigns far more difficult than in the last war.

Allied propaganda in the last war was superior to the propaganda of the enemy and consequently was able to take the offensive from the start and to retain the initiative. It was able quickly to win the campaign at home and then to carry the fight to the enemy and beat him on his own ground.

Hitler has never forgotten this lesson, and the attention devoted in "Mein Kampf" to the war-time rôle of propaganda should have warned us that when Hitler went to war he would not be content to remain on the defensive in his propaganda. The principles which he laid down have now been put into practice. His home propaganda campaign was fought and won before his military campaign began. He attacked and destroyed every rallying point for democratic sentiment by censorship, persecution and terror, and consolidated the position of Nazi ideology by representing it, not as a defensive philosophy of national conservation, but as an aggressive movement which would bring material and spiritual benefit to the German people.

Thus Hitler planned to assure home morale during the



period of the short war which he planned. But his pre-war propaganda did not stop there. He sought also to strike at the morale of his chosen enemies in advance of the outbreak of hostilities. He sought to utilise the domestic discontents of the democratic powers to undermine national unity and purpose. Today some Allied statesmen affect to be amazed at the omnipresence and power of the Fifth Column. Their amazement is a measure only of their own gullibility and blindness, for Hitler has made no secret of his propaganda methods, and no country which is now the victim of them has not been warned of their danger by its more enlightened and more honest citizens.

Yet Nazi success in the propaganda war is due less to the Nazi propaganda offensive in Allied and neutral countries and to Fifth Column plots than it is to the deficiencies of the democracies' own propaganda.

The democracies have attempted no counter-offensive and, in fact, scarcely have defended themselves. There has been no co-ordinated plan to rival Nazi propaganda in neutral countries by presenting the achievements and future prospects of the democratic ideology. At home, democracy has not been interpreted as an instrument of social construction. The citizens of democratic communities have been asked to assume that the system under which they live, a system with obvious present defects, is worthy of the utmost sacrifice. There has been no rallying call to democracy as a means to social advance, no attempt to tell the world that democracy was fighting not merely to defend, but to build.

It may be argued that it is now too late to inaugurate a plan of long-term democratic propaganda, that our public information and propaganda services must now devote all their energies to the immediate needs of a desperate national fight for life. Yet a nation fighting desperately to defend the present, lacks the inspiration which springs from a vision of the future. Now, more than ever, it is necessary to repair past errors and fortify national morale with an articulation of democratic citizenship as a constructive force which can mould the future.

Under the threat of the blitzkrieg there is danger that the film may be regarded, because of the complexity of its production and distribution, as too difficult and too slow a channel of public communication. Yet for instruction in many of the details of home defence, for the distribution of certain information and as a mirror in which democracy may contemplate and be inspired by its own epic struggle, the film has no rival, indeed no substitute. In spite of the present example of the Ministry of Information, films can be made quickly and under emergency conditions. They can be shown widely under emergency conditions. Films can still be made and used however serious the disorganisation of national life may become—if the Ministry of Information chooses to make and use them.

It is not too late to turn to account the final advantage which democracy holds over fascism, an advantage which in itself is sufficient to give us victory. Fascism must set the presentation of its ideological case to the world against a background of ignorance and suppression of fact: democracy can call in to its support all the powers of the free mind, free to select and interpret to the world the sum of human knowledge and experience. And at this moment to present to ourselves and to the world

the mind and face of a free people is no academic indulgence; it is not even remote from the agonising daily problems of the Allied peoples. To show in factual detail these problems, and their practical solution by communal effort, is to reveal democracy still at work. And to show democracy at work is to reap the moral advantage of taking, at long last, the offensive in the war of propaganda. To emphasise the constructive aspects of democratic citizenship, even in defence against a blitzkrieg, is to look forward to the world beyond war; it is to regard democratic citizenship as an instrument, not only of national defence but as an instrument of international construction. It sets against the fascist denial of individual responsibility, the creative responsibility of the democratic citizen.

In our policy of public information by press, radio and film we can inform every account of fact, every appeal, every instruction, with the explicit affirmation of the creative responsibility of the democratic citizen.

It has long been abundantly clear that our use of films in this totalitarian war must be comprehensive and highly organised if it is not to be worse than useless. Neither Treasury inhibitions nor petty vanities must be allowed to stand in the way of a medium whose powers for the present purpose cannot for a moment be denied. There are indications already that the Films Division has awoken to the need of short weekly items, to go to all cinemas, on a basis of information, instruction, or morale purposes. But there are no indications so far that the Films Division realises the many other fields which need to be exploited with just as much urgency and just as much punch. The Division has in its possession plans which cover every field of propaganda effort, from long-term prestige films right down to the day by day recording of the war. But through slowness and inefficiency it is stultifying even its own half-hearted efforts to meet the varied needs of propaganda and morale. What about films for the Dominions? for the Colonies? for non-belligerents, particularly in the New World? What about technical films for the Services? What about the education and instruction of the youth of the nation in our greatest crisis? What about counter-propaganda? What about the daily problems of the housewife and the allotment holder? What about the need to resolve quickly and simply the puzzlement and doubts which the great and crowding events of every week must bring even to the most balanced and serene of us?

The answer is, we are afraid, too familiar. Plans are either "under consideration"; or a few films have been put into production in a scattered and speculative manner—a few films which bureaucratic delays and inefficiency will hold-up for so long that they will have lost most of their point by the time they reach the screen. The answer, in fact, is that the authorities have not learnt how to act either quickly or decisively—let alone how to reorientate propaganda necessities within the framework of a permanent plan. Heaven knows we have a message. Is it too much, after ten months of fooling, to ask the Films Division to find a method of presenting it?

It has been claimed that the Films Division is stultified by lack of co-operation on the part of the film trade or by petty jealousies in Wardour Street. Even if that were true once, it is certainly not true now. Not only are compulsory powers avail-



able, but everyone in the film trade is waiting to be given the chance to help. There has never been more goodwill; never, too, has there been more dissatisfaction.

It may be that the Films Division has a plan. If so, why does it not inform the Film Industry, which is ready and waiting for full mobilisation at an hour when the use of film is of vital importance? And if, by the time these words appear, action has

been taken and these criticisms are no longer valid, the reader will be at least assured that, in one small branch of the war effort, the maximum efficiency has at last been attained. There is no time for delay. The choice is simple. Are films to be used? If so, use them. If not, release the film makers from their heart-breaking inactivity, and free them to serve the needs of closepressed democracy in other ways.

## VISUAL NOTATION

An article by Robert Fairthorne, expert in mathematical interpretation, who has made a number of film experiments in collaboration with Brian Salt

MOST PEOPLE are attracted by the string models in the Science Museum; the diagrammatic proof that the sum of the first  $n$  odd numbers is the square of  $n$ ; the connection between slide-rules, the piano keyboard, and photographic exposure scales; the fact that creases in crumpled paper must be straight, and the steel tape rules that depend on this principle. The ordinary man apprehends the ideas behind these specimens, but lacks the language to express them. The mathematician understands the language, but not always the ideas. Visual aids to the imagination can breathe life into the symbols of the mathematical manipulator and give new experience and, in moderation, enjoyment to the layman. Amongst visual aids the film has a place of its own, because the events it can create are free from the laws of mechanics.

Though the film has a place of its own, it does not displace other methods. Too many animated diagrams are, in fact, sequences of still pictures, the animation showing where the page is turned over. Films show events, not pictures. Used to show events the film can create a new world of mathematical objects for illustration and inspiration.

To stop at this stage is wasteful. Films are neither cheap to produce nor very easy to show. Isolated mathematical objects, however beautiful, are not worth while. Mathematics is a unification, not a collection of curiosities. At the same time, a film purporting to show a survey of kinematics, say, in two reels is ridiculous. The film cannot show abstractions; that is its great virtue. Even if it could, no mind could cope with the inexorable stream of ideas for more than a minute. The solution is to take some fundamental mathematical idea, invent a concrete and simple example of it in action, and develop the theme so that the whole forms a logical and dramatic sequence but the separate parts can be taken by themselves for detailed discussion from whatever angle the teacher thinks fit. This involves a theme important enough to stand thorough chewing, and a presentation that has some immediate visual appeal.

This leads to the conception of a film as an educational instrument like any other lecture apparatus, to be used on many occasions for many purposes. Commentary or titling would tie its application to one approach, one treatment, and one level of scholastic attainment, though sound, as such, might have value in special cases.

Flexibility and breadth of application can be increased by taking into account the projector as well as the screen image.

Variation of the speed of projection, and projection in reverse can be made to have strict mathematical equivalents. A physical example is the reverse projection of two shots, one an ordinary dramatic sequence, the other a flapping flag. The first becomes fantastic; the second is scarcely altered. Why? Similarly, if the shots are cut into short lengths and shuffled. This example illustrates an important physical principle, and also some fundamental ideas in statistics. Note that the details of the shots are irrelevant; it is the projector itself that becomes the lecture apparatus. The natural interest of most students in cinematograph apparatus need not be wasted.

The principle can be carried still further. Because motion on the screen is an illusion, certain motions cannot be represented properly, if at all. Unfortunately the very slow or very rapid motion of precise outlines, that are necessary in mathematical films, cannot be shown properly at twenty-four frames a second, and we are all familiar with the retrograde motion of spoked wheels, due to the "alibi" between successive frames. Yet these very breakdowns of the cinematographic process can be made to correspond exactly with the breakdown of "common-sense" methods when pushed too far in mathematics (or physics). To most students, and many mathematicians, mathematical rigour can look like tiresome pedantry. The film can be made to show that it is not futile.

This conception of the whole cinematographic apparatus as a part of educational equipment, and of the showing of an educational film as a "practical class" rather than as the more or less passive watching of a screen image, differs fundamentally from the theatrical conception of the film. There is no reason why it should not. There are many ways of using the graphic processes; why not of the cinematographic processes?

The main difficulties in the planning of a mathematical film are the choice of a subject; the visualisation of "unnatural" motions; and the temptation to put gallons into a pint pot. The first is met by a wide knowledge of the subject from more than one angle, combined with reasonable acquaintance with cinematography and animation technique; the second by sheer hard thought (probably the next generation, better trained visually, will have little difficulty); the third is effectively countered by the difficulty, for the independent producer, of producing any kind of film at all. So, fundamentally, the production of a mathematical film does not differ from the production of any other kind of film.



## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Distillation.** Production: Arthur Elton. Direction: Peter Baylis. Animation: F. Rodker. Distribution: Non-theatrical. 15 minutes. A silent version is available.

*By an industrial chemist*

THIS FILM deals in a simple manner with the practice of distillation applied to the purification of crude petroleum, and is suitable for students of the ages 12 to 16, or audiences with little chemical knowledge.

Commencing with shots of the usual laboratory models of the carbon and hydrogen atoms, the film then gives a conception of the structure of some hydrocarbons. The possible constitution of many of these compounds present in crude oil is built up, and the heterogeneous nature of this oil indicated.

The familiar type of bench distillation apparatus is used to introduce the real purpose of the film. Shots of an actual distillation of a liquid of three components, previously mixed, show clearly the operations involved in separation by distillation of liquids of different boiling points. A return to the subject of hydrocarbons is made with the introduction of superimposed titles to indicate the closeness in boiling point of many of these compounds and the difficulty of separation by such simple methods as the previous distillation, or the use of the old type of cascade stills. The procedure in a modern petroleum refinery is illustrated by an animated drawing of a cross-sectional view of a fractionating tower. Separation of fractions of known boiling range by means of baffles is shown and their operation explained.

*By a layman*

THIS FILM represents, as far as we know, the first attempt that has ever been made to explain the molecular theory by means of film. There is no doubt that it succeeds in making that difficult conception intelligible to the lay mind—in itself a remarkable enough achievement. Yet the film also will stimulate the expert student of the structure of matter by giving visible life to phenomena which previously have been represented only in text-book diagrams. Both layman and expert cannot fail to be excited by the curiously tactile beauty of the model sequences. The animated diagrams are the most ambitious and the best that have ever been made. The film utilises a courageously simple series of visual analogies with complete success. It is at once a source of pride and exasperation that the world's highest achievement in scientific exposition by film should emerge from this beleaguered democracy in June, 1940.

**Shell Cinemazine No. 5.** Distribution: Non-theatrical, available on 35 mm. and 16 mm. 7 minutes.

THE SHELL FILM UNIT distributes copies of its technical films throughout the world in eight languages. From the wilds of Malaya to the

mountains of Peru embryonic engineers sit and learn the mysteries of the internal combustion engine and the meaning of oil to the present world, through the efforts of Arthur Elton and his boys. And in getting these films shown so widely they are doing a vital service in propaganda. The world has been flooded with German technical and instructional films. The training colleges of such important markets as South America were learning German methods and German thinking. And the long term policy of all this, from the German propaganda angle, was not so much to create a demand for German machinery and mechanical products as to instil in the minds of the new generation that the British ascendancy in the production of machinery was gone; that the hall-mark "British Made" no longer meant the most advanced and desirable in engineering. "Made in Germany" was what was wanted. After all, the engineers had seen German products working on the screen.

But even engineers must have their lighter moments. And *Cinemazine No. 5* is one of the quarterly items that the Shell Unit produces to leaven their technical programmes. It consists of three items, all carrying the underlying message of the importance of oil in the community but told in the pleasant terms of the more intelligent travelogue. The first item shows a sheep farmer of the South African Karoo adopting modern methods of cultivation. Another sure-fire low angle shot for the cameraman has gone. Instead of the mule or oxen team on the skyline there comes once more the ubiquitous tractor.

The second item shows us how oil engineers move oil tanks around on rollers. It has a pleasant "Believe it or not" quality and reminds one of those stories that we read about of how Americans, for some reason best known to themselves, move complete houses incredible distances. But the sight of this huge gasometer-like structure being casually levered around is completely fascinating.

The last item tells how the air-conditioning plant of a modern cinema works. How the air is washed, cooled or heated and then released into the cinema. Apparently, and this was completely new to me, thermometers placed around the cinema allow for special heating or cooling arrangements to be made for any given section. I wonder if statistics would prove that biological influences affect this? That, in fact, the front row of the three-and-sixpennies needs more heat than the back row of the ninepennies!

Altogether *Cinemazine No. 5* is well up to the high standard of its predecessors.

**Vital Service.** Production: Arthur Elton. Direction: D'Arcy Cartwright. Photography: Stanley Rodwell. 7 minutes.

THIS FILM, about a vital hospital service of which few of us have realised the importance, is a competent and worthwhile job. The photography is first-class and the film without pre-

tensions. It aims at taking us for a few minutes behind the scenes of a modern hospital and giving us a new angle on up-to-date methods.

Perhaps more than anything else, a hospital nowadays needs quantities of hot-water and steam. Hot-water for washing and cooking, steam for sterilising. Cleanliness is the watchword. And so the boiler-room becomes an integral part of the hospital's organisation. As important and as necessary as the operating theatre or the wards. Not only must constant supplies of steam and water be on tap night and day, but emergency calls for heating special sections of the hospital must be carried out without delay.

*Vital Service* shows us how this is done. From an elaborate boiler-house the hospital engineers are in constant touch, by means of gauges and thermostats, with every section of the building. An emergency call means the turning of a lever, the springing into life of some more oil jets and the immediate reaction of a tell-tale needle.

The film ends with tracing the part played by the heating department when a sudden operation is ordered. It is fascinating to see how large is the part it plays from the moment of the patient's arrival at the hospital right up to his being lifted on to the operating table.

The film ends there, and there, perhaps, was the only disappointment. My natural sadism would have liked the surgeon at least to have reached for the knife!

**Britannia is a Woman.** Production: British-Movietonews. Distribution: Theatrical. 9 minutes.

ALTERNATIVE TITLE for the first part of this film would be "Fledgling Amazons", and for the rest of the film "Sewing, Nursing and Tyre-changing Bee"; that's not meant to be disrespectful to women—far from it; if anything it is the film which is disrespectful. Do the ATS, WAAFS, WRNS and what-have-yous only stop marching about in order to stand still and look camera-conscious? Are the thousands of women voluntary workers simply the dumb creations of Lady somebody or other—no particular disrespect to her either?

The film, for all its high-sounding title, seems to fall between two stools. Was the object just a big parade of machine-like efficiency? Then it should have been something more emotional than a lot of news-reel shots strung together. Alternatively, was the object to show the job that women have to do in this war, a sort of recruiting film; in other words, bent on getting more and yet more women to join the Colours, whether in uniform or as volunteers? Then in the name of women surely there must be a deeper story of what they do, and why they have come to do it and of how more and more women are needed for this or that useful task.

The film would appear to be another com-



placent hangover from the Chamberlain régime, bureaucratic rather than democratic. The unconscious summing-up is delivered by the commentator himself, though he is really speaking of children at the time, as "not knowing much of war, or what it's all about". No sir; it won't do. Britannia is a tougher woman than this, and pretty shrewd. She wants facts this time. And action.

**The Philippines.** Production: March of Time (No. 2, Sixth Year). Distribution: R.K.O. Radio Pictures. 19 minutes.

LIKE A COOL sea breeze tempering the heat of the European battle, March of Time brings us news of yet another of its leisurely Pacific crises. Here, in the Philippines, just as in Guam an issue or two ago, are beautiful seascapes, shining white Government buildings and the white drill suits of local legislators. Here again are the U.S. armed forces preparing to face the latest manifestation of the yellow peril with what we now ruefully recognise may be a deceptive confidence. Yet the martial tempo of the March of Time narrative still has power to capture our attention for problems remoter than our own. If we seem to write disparagingly of the issues which the Philippines must face in 1946 it is because we envy the United States the longer view which she still can take of international affairs.

*The Philippines* has a good story to tell: a story with a moral which will send anti-imperialists hurrying to their text books for an answer which only the very latest editions are likely to contain. The story is the story of the Philippines' fight for independence from American rule. The fight was won after twenty years campaigning by Manuel Luis Quezon and six years ago U.S. Congress granted full and unconditional independence to take effect in 1946. But to-day a majority of Filipinos believe that Japan, by "Fifth Column" activity and other means is planning the absorption of their country into the Japanese Empire when U.S. protection is withdrawn. The moral of the story is that to-day, Manuel Luis Quezon, now become the first President of the new commonwealth, does not discourage the activities of a new political faction which is anxiously inviting the U.S. Government to withdraw the promise of "complete independence" and to substitute "dominion status" under the U.S., and permanent protection of the Philippines under the American flag.

Even beyond the Atlantic the little countries have their troubles.

**The Voice of the Guns.** Production: Pathé. Distribution: Anglo-American. 10 minutes.

THIS IS A workmanlike one-reel survey of some of the guns in use in the army. Beginning with a section of 1914-18 newsreel material, it passes on, using some specially shot stuff, but mostly drawing on previous Pathé material, to Trench Mortars, Field Guns, Howitzers, Coastal Batteries, Anti-tank, A.A. and Brens. The Bren and

certain A.A. developments seem to be the only really new things since the last war. Particularly interesting is the A.A. of Swedish origin, the Bofors, which has a Bren mounted on top for use against low flying aircraft. Incidentally our own 3.7 A.A. is given an effective range of over 40,000 feet, and some anti-tank guns a rate of fire of 120 shells a minute.

Stress is laid on the mobility of the heavier 9-inch field guns which are mounted bodily on tractors, but pictorially the most exciting stuff is of anti-tank guns firing tracer shells. It would have been interesting to have seen something of naval guns, particularly pom-poms, and aircraft-mounted cannons; but within its short space *Voice of the Guns* contrives to give a good deal of information in a pleasant enough way.

**Italy Beware.** Production: G. T. Cummins for British Paramount News. Distribution: Anglo-American. 14 minutes.

ON MONDAY, June 17th, this short began its run in several London News-cinemas. At lunch-time came the announcement that the French were to cease fighting. By three o'clock *Italy Beware* had been withdrawn from the Monseigneur chain, although it was certainly still possible to see it at the G.-B. News Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue, and probably in other places.

It was not surprising that the film should be withdrawn, not because anyone felt less inclined to admonish Italy, but because a large part of the substance behind this particular warning seemed about to dissolve away with the expected exit from the war of French North Africa and Syria. It was not surprising but it was certainly unfortunate, for the film is a very heartening film indeed, displaying a ring of Allied strength around the Mediterranean, including hundreds of those machines of war, tanks, aeroplanes and the rest, of which we fear we are so short. It was even more unfortunate because the film had obviously been completed some time ago—quite a time before the entry of Italy into the war, judging from internal evidence—and could, in a country where the value of "hot" propaganda was appreciated, have been used to great purpose a few weeks back. It may be an ungentlemanly suggestion, but suitably dubbed copies might even have been allowed to infiltrate into Italy, following the German method. *Italy Beware* might not literally have stolen the thunder of *Baptism of Fire*, but at least it would have provided a typically strong, silent and British antidote.

It is exactly in this strong, silent way that the film is impressive. The Australian and New Zealand Forces, the Egyptian defences, the aeroplanes, the tanks, the Camel Corps, the Allied navies, the Foreign Legion, the Syrian forces, the Palestine forces, the Transjordan Arabs, all sitting there indulging in manœuvres to keep their hands in, between them they make an impressive array of implacable strength. Even that Monday afternoon, it was hard to believe that a large part of this waiting, continually growing, strength now counted for nothing. In the cinema people murmured, "Well, I did not know we had so

much out there". No, nor did any of us know. We had read stories, we had watched news-reels, of various contingents arriving in various places, but we had not seen them all marshalled and in action stations. To keep one jump ahead of a German blitzkrieg the distribution of films has to be just as snappy as any other form of defence activity; as it is, that's one more bit of good propaganda down the drain. Unless they remake it and put it out again inside three days; for even without the French parts, it will still look pretty good.

**The Story of Wool.** Production: G.-B. Instructional Ltd. for International Wool Secretariat. Direction: Philip Leacock. Distribution: Non-theatrical by International Wool Secretariat and National Film Libraries. 16 mm. 21 minutes.

THE STORY of wool passes from early English domestic production of cloth to the coming of shuttles and water power. From rioting weavers robbed of their bread by the new machines to to-day and the hundreds of thousands whose livelihood is the weaving industry.

Planned primarily for educational use and particularly as a "background" film it collates many historical, geographical, and informational facts about wool and conscientiously relates these in a form which provides opportunities for digression into routine educational subjects. The facts are capably knit by a good story and an excellent commentary which attempts at times to say a little too much.

The student of documentary technique will find a bone of contention in an interesting episode of the Luddites' riots showing weavers smashing the new machines. It is sensational, it is out of key. The sequence in itself is a good one, but it sets a problem of "theatrical" ways and means.

The educational value of the film would have been augmented had it shown something of the fine tapestries, carpets, garments and dyes of the past with emphasis placed upon our earlier cultural attainments. Something of the English "Guild" and its functions would have made interesting matter and fuller information on the laboratory and physiological aspects of wool might have been incorporated. The terms of reference of the film are appropriately broadened to Colonial aspects, but more might have been made of Colonial geographical data affecting the rearing and grazing of sheep.

To-day not the least of a producer's problems is the fact that teachers expect increasingly higher educational content from films of the "background" genre. (A sponsor may or may not be prepared to go all the way in this direction.) *The Story of Wool* does a good best to satisfy in this respect and earns its place in any educational film library.

It is to be hoped that when the film is released it will be accompanied by printed notes on the associated groups of facts and ideas which were the working materials of the story writer and researcher during the planning. They could be used by the teacher at various points to expand the content of the film along the best lines.



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## CHILDREN AS FILM CRITICS

This essay on Ekk's *Road to Life* won a prize offered by DNL in conjunction with the Education Department of the Burslem Industrial Co-operative Society. Another prize essay will be published next month.

By a senior pupil at the City School of Commerce

THIS FILM made a great impression on me, perhaps because it is the first Russian film I have seen, and it has certainly made me want to see more.

The treatment of theme and photography is so different from American films, as is the stark realism of the sordid details, such as the last gasps of Kolka's mother, the drunken madness of his father, the dead Mustapha jolting on the train, the stoning of the dog, and the smeared make-up on the snivelling women after the wrecking of the hut.

The fine photography impressed me very much, and certain parts stick in my memory. One of these is where Sergei was alone in conflict with the boys: he was shown alone on a black background, with a strong light on the single figure, with no furniture or other figures to distract the eye. I think this emphasised how alone he was and also the strength of his character. Another was when he returned from Moscow to the Collective and was confronted by a sacked refectory. He sat down, alone again, on a bench, clearly lighted, and gradually dark, unlighted figures closed in on him, the shapes of the boys. One more excellent effect was when Mustapha, Kolka, and the pick of the Collective went to the hut to break up the gang, and Mizcha was drunk. The room was seen from his bleared eyes, whirling round in a mad kaleidoscope, with voices swelling and dwindling in a crazy rhythm. Suddenly the sounds stopped, and in a cold clear shot a levelled revolver was seen. Something of the same effect was felt when the first rebels from the Collective rolled home along the railway track. The camera was apparently behind their legs, swaying and lurching with them. An effective shot was when Sergei was being tossed in the air by the boys and the next shot was of earth being thrown up from the ditches the boys were digging.

Although the film glorified community life and the purpose of human beings as cogs in a machine, one became interested in the welfare of individual characters such as Kolka and Mustapha. The plot was almost reminiscent of Greek tragedy in the strictness to which the one plot was adhered to. (An English or American film could hardly have resisted introducing a romance between Sergei and one of the female workers, or even a sister of one of the boys.) The dramatic irony of Kolka's best friend, Mustapha, being the cause of his (Kolka's) mother's death, for the sake of one stolen apple, is also Greek in its force.

Suspense was cleverly used to keep the attention keyed. Would the boys escape? Would Mustapha come back? Would he catch the train? These were questions we kept asking ourselves.

The introduction of the characters as the film progressed appealed to me, as it made the film seem more real than in our system, where the whole cast is introduced together before the film begins. It makes it rather like reading a novel or biography.

The superb acting must not be forgotten. The Communist idea of a community of people working together was shown in its brightest aspect here.

The boy, Mustapha, was a wonderful actor. His squat, Slavonic, yet fascinating face expressed suspicion, sullenness, devilment, joy, and sheer happiness in a way that our most experienced and ascetic-looking actors could envy, and his portrayal of death, I think, without make-up, was perhaps too convincing for comfort, as was the twisting of his stocky little body in the air as he was flung from the train.

The boy Kolka was very, very convincing in his roar of terror when his drink- and grief-crazed father tried to kill him. His full-throated bellow was much more real than all the gestures,

covering of the face with the hands, and blood-curdling screams. He also was very good in utter dejection after having been beaten.

Sergei, with his hat expressing his emotion for him, and Kolka's father's wild grief were good touches. Mizcha, the gang-leader, when he had been robbed of his accomplices, the Wild Boys, determined to be gay, and breaking down, gave a great performance, and the death of Kolka's mother was worthy of attention.

I liked the comedy of the stolen spoons, with the contrast between the dog enjoying his food and the boys in such distress with theirs (Mustapha being covered with it), but did not care for the very obvious low comedy of the cutting away of a most important portion of a lady's dress, which I thought unworthy of the film.

However, I think that *The Road to Life* will remain in my memory long after the majority of films that come to our local cinemas, for its photography, its acting and its story, although I'd be glad to forget some of the more harrowing bits.

## STORY FILM OF THE MONTH

### GASLIGHT

By a Film Critic

TO THE BRITISH film producer the British past has nearly always been one long, rather vulgar joke. Kings chaw chicken bones; Regency bucks mince across the set in phoney wigs, the nineteenth century is either a funny oddity in British history or it is sanctified by the mystic presence of the little Queen. Neither extreme is usually convincing, but in *Gaslight* we have a film of the eighties which takes its background seriously and with relish. (The title, by the way, comes from what was in those days one of the most prominent parts of interior decoration—the fishtail gas burner and its globes and gasoliers.) The result is a polished and finely made film which can hold its own with *Pygmalion* and *French without Tears*. So good is *Gaslight*, yet so firmly confined within the established conventions of the screen, that one can find little to pick upon for special emphasis, with the exception of its unusual theme.

The author of the stage play from which *Gaslight* is taken is Patrick Hamilton, who will be remembered for his psychological thriller *Rope*. In *Gaslight* he again tackles a psychological theme. A man is trying to drive his wife mad by making her believe that she is not responsible for her actions. He hides jewels and pictures and is trying to persuade her that she steals them in fits of unconscious aberration. His motive for doing this is that she has found a clue to the fact that he is a murderer, though she does not realise the implications of her discovery. In consequence, he tries to derange her mind so that no one will take anything she says seriously.

The direction of Thorold Dickinson has the

signal virtue of unobtrusiveness. So smoothly are the scenes played that one is never aware of the direction at all, and there can be no greater praise for a director than this.

Bernard Knowles's photography is equally unobtrusive and for that reason, equally first-rate. He has caught the atmosphere of the interiors of the eighties with their spindly furniture and host of knick-knacks. Anyone who has seen such rooms surviving today will recognise what I mean. Most of the knick-knacks stand away from the wall; the frames of the pictures on the walls are heavy; there are groups of small pictures standing on little easels on every flat space; the wallpapers are dark with a bold design. The real rooms are usually underlit and a pattern of shadows. This Knowles has reproduced. His work is an answer to the still too many people who go round saying that first-class cinema photography cannot be found outside Hollywood.

I envied the Art Director. He must have spent weeks and enjoyed himself collecting the furniture for the sets. Nearly every film of the nineteenth century suffers because the sets are empty. Few people have the patience to collect enough furniture for them. Here again the attention to detail is one of the many successes of the film. And finally, the dresses alone, particularly those of Diana Wynyard and Cathleen Cordell, make the film worth seeing.

Production: John Corfield for British National. Direction: Thorold Dickinson, from the stage play by Patrick Hamilton. Photography: Bernard Knowles. Distribution: Anglo-American.



# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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## THE HOME OF TRAVEL FILMS

(This third article of our series about the Specialist Cinema Movement is by Arthur Leslie, Manager of the Polytechnic Cinema, Regent Street, London, for twenty years.)

IT IS INTERESTING to recall a little known fact. The Polytechnic Theatre, London, is the "father of all cinemas" which are now scattered all over the world. Here it was in February, 1896, that the, then, entirely new invention of the Cinematographe, was first demonstrated in Britain. It had previously only been seen at the Grand Café, Paris, for a fortnight. Later, an English pioneer, to whom sufficient credit has never been given, Mr Frederick R. West, showed here his pictures *Our Navy* for many years, with the greatest success, attracting large and fashionable audiences. But cinema then was still in the embryonic stage and the "magic lantern" was still greatly in evidence to press home the claim of Explorer and Educationalist. News Items were crude affairs, and pioneers like Richard and Cherry Kearton, Herbert Ponting and Frank Hurley, were adding laurels to their already wonderful "still" pictures by introducing "spools" of cinematograph film in their lectures of exploration. The great difficulty in the early days was to find a suitable theatre or hall in which a film and slide show could be arranged for a season. At varying intervals from October 1899, to June 1912, West's pictures were a distinct success at the Polytechnic. Cherry Kearton in 1910 claimed a short season at the Palace Theatre with the first animal pictures ever brought from Africa.

Herbert Ponting at the Christmas of 1913 presented his famous film *With Captain Scott in the Antarctic* at the Philharmonic Hall. This continued for ten months, when war broke out and suspended any further efforts for "season" lectures, until Sir Ernest Shackleton in the Christmas of 1919 again used the Philharmonic Hall for his "marvellous moving pictures" of his latest Antarctic Expedition, giving 249 performances. Then, in 1921, a group of explorers, under the chairmanship of Sir Francis Younghusband, commissioned Mr Gerald Christy, of the Lecture Agency, to engage the Polytechnic to inaugurate a policy of showing films of "reality", an experiment for which many people prophesied failure, on the grounds that the public "for that sort of thing" was not sufficiently large to make it a commercial success. Happily, their predictions were falsified, for almost up to the present time a public "for that sort of thing" has supported the "Home of Films of Reality", as is proved by the great successes and long runs achieved by such outstanding pictures as *Wonderland of Big Game*, *In the Tree Tops*, *Climbing Mount Everest*, *The Vast Sudan*, *Pearls and Savages*, *Cape to Cairo*, *Chang*, *Rango*, *An Eastern Odyssey*, *Africa*

*Speaks*, *Dassan*, *Tabu*, *Man of Aran*, *Kamet Conquered*, *Elephant Boy*, and *Dark Rapture*.

This impressive list emphasises two points, the inauguration of the "specialist" film movement, and the introduction of a type of picture now understood as "Documentary", a department of cinematography in which British enterprise excels. One may ask "Why has the movement not met with greater success?" since it may claim to have rendered a two-fold service in devoting special cinema theatres to the exhibition of special films and to the public which has so warmly welcomed them, and secondly, to the enterprising and undaunted producers. One must admit, the latter are faced with a hard problem. Returning to England with a real life film record which in many cases may represent years of work, great risks to life and limb, and a very considerable sum of money, the traveller has to find a means by which he may bring his work to the notice of the public before he can hope to reap the rewards of appreciation which are justly his, as well as reimburse himself for his outlay. Both Renters and Exhibitors, owing to the exigencies of their programmes, look coldly at him and can only show his work in an inadequate form, shortened, or at best, serialised, and then sandwiched between items of an entirely different character. Commercial considerations compel them to cater for the widest public and endeavour to please all tastes. Therefore the work of such a cinema as the Polytechnic has, during the past 18 years, placed at the disposal of producers of "out of the ordinary" or "documentary" films, a shop window in which, so to speak, they may place their wares profitably, secure the verdict of the London Press, and conduct the world-wide marketing arrangements whose success alone can make their enterprise commercially possible. Another factor has been the attempt made by Hollywood producers—purely for commercial reasons—to take the "reality" from nature pictures and substitute a "fake" method, which would stimulate the excitement and pander to the vulgar curiosity of sensationalism.

This point is vividly emphasised in Frank F. Smythe's book *Kamet Conquered* (page 411) in which he says—"The explorer who would take a record of his work should remember that unless he has something really thrilling to offer the film magnates and the public, his film will not prove acceptable; he must concentrate on 'human interest'. He must remember that his photographs of toil and difficulty on the 'Roof of the World', which meant so much to him, count for



nothing when the 'accidents', 'blizzards', and 'avalanches' can be faked in the studio by the judicious use of 'sets, salt and aeroplane propellers'. His miserable efforts at the authentic, his pictures of scenery, count for naught against the sensational products of Elstree and Hollywood. The public has been so soaked in sensational make-believe, that the unvarnished truth is no longer anything but boring. Truth has been prostituted on the altars of 'art'. The cinema audience of to-day would hardly be content to see the conquest of Everest without the introduction of a fatality. The cleverness of the faker has encompassed the death of truth, and those who sit breathing the disinfected air of a cinema are incapable of realising the effort of the cinematographer who fumbles with frozen fingers at his apparatus on the snows of the poles or the Himalaya; they will turn with relief from the sobriety of truth and enterprise to the insobriety of the cabaret and the murderous antics of the gunmen. Truth is dead, and those explorers who contemplate an unfaked film record of their expeditions will do well to mark the fact."

We witnessed fake incidents in parts of *Trader Horn* and *Bring 'Em Back Alive*. The result of these false values brought the various societies, representing animal cruelty, crashing down with vengeance on all such films, compelling the censor to very stern regulations. The habit of doping animals for exciting scenes was exposed in the American press.

The combination of these actions has taken away a deal of heart from travel producers, and

as a consequence there have been fewer subjects in the last few years in the mood of *Chang*, *Kamet Conquered*, or *Dassan*.

It would have been thought that the burden of commercialism on an explorer's work might have been shouldered by such recognised bodies as the Royal Geographical, Zoological, or kindred societies. But in this country they have said a resolute NO to the actual sponsoring of exploration or travel from the standpoint of film only. They argue that a journey through Africa or scaling Mount Everest, when once decided upon, is a serious mission for definite attainment of a specified object. A film record could only be a part and unfortunately is viewed as a very small part of the actual work undertaken. Whilst they are willing, and have on nearly all occasions made grants towards the cost of expeditions, they would not consent to be responsible for the complete scheme or enterprise, however well the producer may plead his cause. In spite of this fact they fully recognise the value of "stills" and films (indeed they greatly use and exploit them) when collated by the undaunted producers. I learnt this attitude on the part of the Royal Geographical Society when Captain J. B. Noel, official cinematographer to the first two Everest Expeditions in 1921-23, found it necessary to make himself responsible for all his gear and equipment and the major portion of his personal expenses. He also carried with him the knowledge that should he prove a nuisance, or get in the way, he was to be thrown over the nearest precipice! The contrary, how-

ever, has proved possible in the U.S.A. where the Geographical Society of Washington and other similar bodies, have deliberately undertaken responsibility for many film achievements of travel, exploration, animal and bird life. Some of the late Martin Johnson's efforts were made possible by their finance and planning. Capt. C. W. R. Knight's bird films and the scientific exploration in Alaska conducted by Father Bernard Hubbard, S.J., owe some of their success to this enterprising society. They have become a wealthy society by courage and enterprise and they have extended the knowledge of their many members to almost every corner of the globe, by means of the *Geographical Magazine*, which has a circulation of over 2,000,000. This great interest on the part of the public should prove a stimulus to a continuous ever-growing picture-conscious generation. For the travel film fulfils the first fundamental requisite of the cinema—it shows one half of the world what the other is like, and this elementary interest in the strange, the dangerous and the unknown remains today the psychological basis for descriptive travel films.

Looking back on the list of travel film makers, we cannot fail to distinguish those who, instead of filming the surface of things, have endeavoured to bring a deeper interpretation to the subject matter. Thus from Flaherty's *Nanook* and Hurley's *Pearls and Savages* (1920) at almost regular intervals up to the current *Dark Rapture*, each producer has brought a higher approach to the "documentary" method.

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# DOCUMENTARY IN THE UNITED STATES

## U.S. Film Service Fights for Life

With *The Plow that Broke the Plains* and *The River*, made in 1936 and 1938, the U.S. Film Service established itself in the leadership of the American documentary film world. Two events last month spotlighted that leadership: test release of its maternity film, *Fight for Life*, and the action of the House Appropriations Committee in striking out of the Federal Security Agency's budget a request for funds to continue the Film Service on a permanent basis.

The premiere of *Fight* at the Belmont Theatre in New York City brought Pare Lorentz the critical applause to which he is accustomed. With a few exceptions the toughest row of critics in the U.S. liked it, the *New York Post* declaring: "There will be no better motion picture made in 1940." *Time* gave it a featured review in preference to important Hollywood releases, adding insult to injury with, "It makes even such top-notch Hollywood medical pictures as *Men in White* and *Dr Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* seem unreal and stagy". Sharing the honours with Lorentz' picture making, was the heart-beat scoring of composer Louis Gruenberg. The premiere was a real event in filmdom, signalling full public recognition of the documentary film form.

As a documentary, however, *Fight* had other critics to face; and a few days later the picture stirred a medical controversy. Some of Lorentz' statistics on mortality in childbirth were called into question. And the picture was said to be gruelling, cheerless, depressing to prospective mothers. A woman columnist wrote: "I thought the film *Birth of a Baby* . . . too full of sweetness and light. Pare Lorentz has gone to the opposite extreme. Indubitable artist that he is, he has for the sake of dramatic sequence, magnified the dangers of childbirth." Other similar criticisms were summed up in the statement: "The fault of the picture is the inculcation of fear as the result of erroneous statistics."

Such criticisms, if valid, were damaging. Lorentz defended his statistics, and the mood of the picture. But the medical problem was clearly not a matter for reporter-dramatist Lorentz to argue. The dispute raised a general problem in the production of medical and other scientific films: Where does the scientific responsibility lie? Film makers do not possess authority in all the sciences they treat of; they must, therefore, have advisers who in the event of a dispute, may be appealed to. In a letter to the *New York Times* (March 24), Lorentz finally laid the burden on Paul De Kruif, upon whose book of the same title, the picture was based.

The question of the effect of *Fight* is difficult to resolve. A *World Telegram* reporter refuted the imputation of fear, citing several unfrightened women patrons at the theatre. No final answer is likely short of a special study in audience reaction. Most of the picture's critics agree, however, that it establishes powerfully, effectively and validly its central thesis: the needless death rate in childbirth.

At the present time Film Service has in production two shorts and one feature length film: *Power and the Land* (Joris Ivens—REA), which has been shot and awaits commentary and scoring; Robert Flaherty's AAA picture which needs more seasonal shooting; and *Ecce Homo* (Behold the Man), Lorentz' feature on industrial unemployment, upon which shooting is expected to be resumed.

## Another Dark Rapture?

The adventurous Armand Denis (*Dark Rapture*), who recently returned from a ten month Asiatic expedition (previous trip African), reports that he has 40,000 feet of negative on primitive peoples and animals. Accompanying the Armand Denis-Leila Roosevelt expedition was the writer Hassoldt Davis. The dramatic purpose of the trip was to photograph the ancient and almost extinct practice of snake worship in Burma, a ceremonial in which a priestess dominates the living snake god, at present a 14-foot King Cobra, incarnation of the Naga deity, by kissing it three times on the head (*Life*, March 4).

The expedition worked chiefly in Burma, but visited also India, Nepal (second American expedition ever to enter that country, according to Denis), China and Africa. Among the Burma pictures are elephants hauling four-ton logs in teak forests; the remains of 5,000 pagodas in the dead city of Pagan, capital of Burma from 200 to 1200 A.D.; and primitive oil wells from which crude oil is removed in buckets. The expedition spent three weeks on the Yunnan highway, primitively constructed life-line of China, where they observed some disintegration of the famous road due to monsoons, and saw hundreds of American trucks stuck in the mud. The trip was interrupted by the war; but three months were spent in Africa photographing lions and rhino in Tanganyika. Return was made by freighter from Cape Town via Trinidad to Boston.

Cutting and editing of the film are now under way.

## Educational Film Institute

*Valley Town*, a study of machines and men, is the title of a new film produced jointly by the Educational Film Institute of New York University and Documentary Film Productions, Inc., which will be completed by the time this appears. The film was directed by Willard Van Dyke; film plan and commentary by Spencer Pollard. Running 33 minutes the film is documentary in nature with music by Marc Blitzstein. Although there are some re-enacted sequences, no professional actors were used. The picture is an analysis of the relation of technological change to employment; and the need for a solution to the unemployment problem created by new machinery is demonstrated.

Another film to be produced by the Educational Film Institute on the subject of agricultural surpluses in relation to the food needs of the country will be directed by John Ferno. The

Institute has done the research and the filming group will soon be on location.

Joris Ivens has been engaged for some time on the script of a story on economic frontiers, and it is reported that he departed during the second week in May for shooting on location in the West.

*And So They Live* and *The Children Must Learn*, first two completed productions of the Institute were well received at previews held during April.

## Under Way

At a recent meeting of the Association of Documentary Film Producers, announcement was made of productions under way among the members. A feature film on civil liberties, produced by Frontier Films and photographed by Paul Strand, is now in the silent cutting stage. It combines the documentary technique with re-enactments by some of Broadway's best troupers. Also a Frontier production and also in the cutting stage is *White Flood*, a scientific short on glacier formations photographed in Alaska by William Osgood Field, Jr. A second issue of *Datelines* is in preparation by Laura Hays, Jean Lenauer, Julian Roffman, and William Welles. Elaine Basil and Leo Seltzer have begun shooting on a film contrasting the merit and spoils systems for the Municipal Civil Service Commission. Planned as a 35mm. three-reeler, it will be shown next summer at the World's Fair. John Ferno, Willard Van Dyke, and Julian Roffman have had their cameras in Kentucky for the Educational Institute of New York University and are now cutting in New York.

## Sweden

*Travelling the Middle Way in Sweden* is the pertinent title of a new film completed jointly by the Harmon Foundation and the Co-operative League of U.S.A.

## Inter-Learning

"Too often in the past," spoke Mr Ivens to the Association of Documentary Film Producers, "documentary films have been one-man jobs. The ideal, of course, would be that each member of the crew have a distinct function of his own and be able to co-ordinate it with the functions of the others."

In the interest of such co-ordination, ADFP has been sponsoring educational forums where cameramen, directors, writers, and editors may learn from each other. In January and February three sessions on editing dealt with the relation of the editor to the other members of the production, with the visual cutting of an expository theme and the psychological cutting of a dramatic theme, and with the editing of sound in relation to picture. Consecutive planning by Helen Van Dongen called for the screening of seven examples, and for talks by Joris Ivens, Paul Strand, David Wolff, Lothar Wolff, Edwin Locke, and Irving Lerner.



## THE RETURN OF ZORRO

FOR THE first time in movie history, the whole career of a famous screen star is being put on view to the general public. Ever since the death of Douglas Fairbanks in 1939, the Museum of Modern Art Film Library has been besieged by requests from all over the country to present a memorial programme of the works of the famous actor-producer. Fortunately, last year Mr Fairbanks had generously presented to the Film Library his entire private collection of his own films.

From this material the Film Library has selected sixteen films arranged as a series of eight separate programmes. They survey the whole screen character and career of Douglas Fairbanks, from his first to his last American films: *The Lamb*, 1915, to *Mr Robinson Crusoe*, 1932.

Douglas Fairbanks was a leading Broadway actor when the newly-formed Triangle Corporation persuaded him to make movies. He made altogether 48 films. In later years, he became a good friend to the Museum of Modern Art and before he died had made a gift to the Film Library of 2,700,000 feet of film. This, aside from the D. W. Griffith collection, is the only complete assembling of one man's film career in the possession of the Film Library.

In the programme note, Mr Alistair Cooke, who saw over a half million feet of Fairbanks celluloid in order to prepare the programmes, says:

"In kidding almost every fad and affectation of the war and post-war years, Fairbanks held a flattering mirror up to the average American. For a whole generation, he made physical well-being and infectious optimism the essence of heroics and was so immensely popular at the

time that he was able to sign up d'Artagnan, Robin Hood, Petruchio and other literary heroes, to play Douglas Fairbanks—to the enhanced prestige of them all.

"In his early comedies he usually starts out as one of his own luckless disciples. In the last-reel he soars beyond Horatio Alger to become a boy's hero who cannot be matched today in the movies and approximates most nearly to the comic-strip *Superman*. Incidentally, he is probably the only screen star to relegate the professional athletic stand-in to the status of a lagging amateur."

The first programme of the series is a Film Library innovation. Called *The Screen Character of Douglas Fairbanks*, it sketches in two hours the whole Fairbanks' movie career, showing by what means he was able over seventeen years of movie productions to keep his title of "the best liked figure on the screen". This programme uses excerpts chronologically from *The Lamb* (1915), *A Modern Muskeeter* (1917), *Say Young Fellow* (1918), *Knickerbocker Buckaroo* (1919), *The Mollycoddle* (1920), *Don Q* (1925), and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1929).

After the exhibition in New York, these programmes will become available for non-commercial circulation to museums, colleges, schools, and film-study groups throughout the country.

The programme schedule is as follows:

*When the Clouds Roll By* and *The Nut*.

*The Mark of Zorro*.

*The Three Musketeers*.

*The Thief of Bagdad*.

*The Black Pirate*.

*Around the World in 80 Minutes*.

*Fairbanks' Screen Character*.

*Manhattan Madness* and *Wild and Woolly*.

## FILM ASSOCIATES, INC.

FILMS NOT normally "Hollywood", yet not limited to "documentary", will be produced by a new motion picture company whose formation was recently announced. Named "Film Associates, Inc." (620 Fifth Avenue, New York City), the company is composed of well-known figures in motion picture and radio, including the English novelist, Aldous Huxley.

First of a projected series of timely features and shorts, will be a feature-length film scripted by Joseph Krumbold, which treats of historic events between the last and present great wars. The Krumbold script is almost ready for shooting; stockshot material is being purchased; and the company expects to start production shortly in New York, on location and in Hollywood. Negotiations for distribution are under way.

The members of the company, equal shareholders constituting an equal partnership, are as follows:

Felix Greene, formerly American representative of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Theodore Lawrence, formerly research engineer in charge of recording development, United Research Corporation; sent by Paramount to Europe as chief sound engineer and later technical supervisor; later European technical supervisor to 20th Century-Fox. Has since been employed with United Artists in Hollywood.

Aldous Huxley, of world-wide reputation as novelist; for the past two years has been working for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Irving Reis, originator and first director of the Columbia Workshop of the Columbia Broadcasting System; for the past two years writer and director for Paramount and R.K.O.

Henwar Rodakiewicz, formerly director for Paramount, and writer for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in Hollywood, and with production experience in Mexico and New York.

Gerald Heard, author of *Science in the Making*, *The Emergence of Man*, *The Third Mortality*, *Pain*, *Sex and Time*, etc.

## NEWS FROM CANADA

### Canada at War

The war has caused a burst of activity in the production of documentary and informational films in Canada. New Canadian films are attuned to the Dominion's role as provider for the Allies. They are intended "to give public information on what Canada is doing in the war; particularly on how the war affects the lives of ordinary people". Principal productions are under government supervision and work is well organised. Theatrical distribution is expected to be extended to Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

Outstanding is a new series of one-reelers entitled *Canada at War*.

First of the series is *Atlantic Patrol*, which was released April 26th and is currently showing in first run houses from coast to coast in the Dominion. Film is reported made chiefly of existing material from England and other places. Distribution Columbia.

Second is *Private Lives*, concerning "a letter home from lads at Aldershot". Production is almost completed.

Third is *Women in the War*, which is in production. Two units are now in the field. The eastern unit is under the direction of Stanley Hawes and accompanying him is cameraman Roger Barlow who worked on *Design for Education* and *The City*.

### Society

Set up to distribute art films in 1935, the National Film Society of Canada incautiously pioneered into the educational field, which is now its chief interest. Last week it signed an agreement with the International Film Centre, smoothing details of shipping and previewing preparatory to interchange of American and Canadian films.

The Film Society showed Canadians their first foreign language films. Then, tempted by the important audience sprinkled through the hinterlands, it undertook 16mm. distribution. Projectors were few and far between; the prospect of audience-building in semi-wilderness was grim. The Society started with the few projectors it could muster from schools and university extension systems. To its surprise, it found that people gathered more readily in rural districts than in towns, where film showings had to compete with other attractions. Slowly the interest of schools prompted the Government to subsidise more projectors. This year industry is lending its equipment. The Shell Oil Company, producers of *Transfer of Power*, one of the outstanding films at the World's Fair last summer, is sponsoring an educational programme on the British Empire which will ultimately go before 400 audiences. Growing interest in study guides, follow-up lectures, and film libraries, means that the Society's spade-work is done.



# REAR-GUARD FILMING

By DOUGLAS SLOCOMBE

THE CHIEF CONCERN of an English cameraman who is filming—or attempting to film—a German invasion of a small country is, quite apart from taking care of his valuable life, to see that he retreats with the defending army and that he is not captured by the invaders. He therefore has to film with one eye on the door if he does not want to spend the rest of his days in ignominious internment.

After two experiences in this type of filming, I have now come to regard it as a sort of rear-guard action. The first time this happened to me was in Poland where I spent a month filming the preparations of the army and then a fortnight filming what was virtually the scene of my own retreat.

On that occasion, I had just left—or rather been thrown out of—Danzig, where I had been filming the last stages in the Nazification of that city for Herbert Kline, the U.S. film director. Kline joined me in Warsaw on July 1st, and with our two young wives to complete the crew, we set to work. As the first waves of German bombers flew over Warsaw, exactly one month later, we were already making our way North—sitting on boxes of explosives in an ammunition train—to film the fighting on the frontiers of the Corridor. But by the time we reached Torun after a two-day journey which in normal times would have taken only three hours and during which we were nearly bombed out of existence a dozen times, we found that the Polish “lines” had completely collapsed, that there was no “front” anywhere, and that the Polish army was in full, bewildered retreat. From that day onwards, our filming was done while we retreated also. A car which had been sent to us from London was due to arrive at Gdynia on September 4th, but as Poland’s only port was cut off from the rest of the country within the first two days and fell completely into German hands soon after, we were severely handicapped in the matter of swift and independent travel.

Moreover, trains were formed in a very haphazard fashion and as there were no definite time-tables one had to spend sometimes 24 hours dozing on a station floor before a train of sorts (invariably with every window broken) would steam in. Our retreats were therefore mostly timed more by luck than good sense. And plenty of luck we had for in every case we vacated a spot only a few hours before the Germans came in. We filmed quite a lot of machine-gun activity and a plane crash in Torun and then made a second nightmare journey back to Warsaw, taking this time 48 hours and losing four of the carriages on our train in bombing attacks.

Warsaw was reached in the midst of an air raid, as indeed was Torun and every other town we were to visit during the war. We found that the Government and military authorities had flown and we were left stranded without filming

passes or any form of official identification. We decided to try and follow the Government and once again we took a train bound for an unknown destination. This last point didn’t matter much for we never reached it anyway. On the second day out the train was so severely bombed that a quarter of its refugee passengers were killed and the few coaches which were left, together with the locomotive, were put completely out of action. Meanwhile, of course, the camera was running all the time. Abandoning the train, we were able to hire a couple of primitive farmcarts in which we slowly continued our journey. It was during these long days of snail-paced travel under the blazing midsummer sun that we shot some of the best sequences of our film. A tiny village, dozens of miles away from the nearest town or place of any military significance, which we found blazing from one end to the other, provided us with an unforgettable scene as old peasant women ran about barefoot on the scorched soil, feebly throwing pails of water on the roaring furnaces which had once been their homes, their cattle and their haystacks. Daily discarding more and more of our belongings which we left in a long trail along the roadside, we finally reached the Latvian frontier and got out safely with our film two days before the Russian tanks rumbled in.

In many ways, at any rate as far as I was concerned, history repeated itself in Holland. Once again I arrived in the country a month before Hitler’s troops, and spent much profitable time photographing the Prime and Foreign Ministers and the General Staff. I was shown round the famous “water line” of Holland of which so much was expected and so little materialised. And I was arrested more times than I can remember. The last occasion was the forerunner of a new decree which was passed forbidding the carrying of cameras by anyone in Holland. This situation did not help me much in my work. And then one night I returned to my hotel at about 2.30 in the morning and was just weighing up the respective merits of bromo-seltzer or aspirin to demolish a headache, when I heard a familiar but almost forgotten noise. It was that same protracted drone which I had not heard since I had left Poland. Looking out of the window, I counted over 200 planes silhouetted against the breaking dawn. Dutch anti-aircraft fire burst furiously into action, but it seemed to me that the bursts were miles wide of their targets. Despite the intense activity in the air, none of the Amsterdam sirens went off. It was only the next morning, after several planes had been allowed to fly about unhindered and after one of them had dropped a salvo of bombs which blew up three houses, killed 40 and blasted three people and their bicycles into a canal, that the sirens at last wailed their acknowledgment of the deadliness of these German air weapons.

Meanwhile, things were not looking too well for

me. I was still in Amsterdam. The Military Command was still in the Hague. And I had not yet been given my promised filming permit and war passes. Since all photography had been forbidden even in peacetime, these passes were all the more necessary now that hostilities had started. Every attempt I made to reach the Hague or even phone the military authorities failed. The Germans had played the same trick they used in Poland to such good effect. They had in a few hours completely cut off every form of communication between the Administrative and Business capitals.

Moreover, the situation in the streets did not help me to sneak shots. Every street in Amsterdam and outside was patrolled at twenty-yard intervals by armed guards, and shooting would break out every now and again when a short battle raged with fifth columnists hiding in different houses. In many cases, people were shot at sight. As I rigged up my camera on the hotel roof and lay down behind the parapet to film some planes flying low on the horizon I was astonished to hear a series of short whistles over my head, followed by sharp reports. One look into the street below showed me I was being fired upon by some over-zealous youth in a green uniform. Not wishing to be arrested at this stage, since it would have been impossible for me to contact the military chiefs to explain my integrity, I flew down the service stairs of the hotel and hid my kit. I spent one more agonising day, going between the chief of police and the local army authorities in an attempt to get some kind of permit, without any result. And then, after still getting nowhere, it became evident that the Germans, who had been overrunning the country pretty freely, were about to take Amsterdam too. So, together with the rest of the British journalists, I decided it was time to worry about my retreat. It took us only two days to get back, thanks to the help of some Dutch soldiers who escorted us through the firing line. German bombers who mistook our cars for troop carriers constantly flew overhead and dropped bombs at random in the night without doing us any harm. On one occasion also, machine-gun fire broke out all around us, as some parachutists landed and replied to the fire of our accompanying soldiers.

**S.O.S.**

The Director of the NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY would be grateful for a copy of DNL JANUARY (First Issue), to complete his File. Will anyone with a spare copy please send it to DNL, 34 Soho Square, London, W.1.



# FILM SOCIETY NEWS

## HISTORIES

(This feature presents at regular intervals detailed resumés of the progress of various Film Societies.)

### No. 2: Tyneside

The Tyneside Film Society came into being at a public meeting convened in Newcastle in December, 1932, by Ernest Dyer, whose tragic death last year was a blow, not only to the Tyneside Film Society, but to the Film Society movement in general, as we think his many friends will testify. The volunteer Committee set up on that occasion worked for over a year before it finally overcame the various obstacles which confronted it. Chief amongst these obstacles was the difficulty in securing licences for Sunday exhibitions of films, for which there was no precedent on Tyneside. This difficulty was eventually surmounted by the preparation of a lengthy memorandum signed by a number of more or less well-known and "respectable" people on Tyneside, copies of which were duplicated, and sent to each member of the Watch Committee. This memorandum, which contained a number of effective quotations from "The Film in National Life: the report of the Commission on Educational and Cultural films", and which generally stated the case for a Film Society, did the trick, and by January, 1934, the Society was able to announce its first short season. With an initial membership of about 350, the Society was just able to pay its way, and from that time it has not looked back, until, of course, the outbreak of war. The peak membership of the Society was achieved in the last season, i.e. the season 1938-39, when there were just under 1,600 subscribing members. With the growth in membership, the value for money offered by the Society increased proportionately. The following table may be of interest to members of other Film Societies; it indicates how, with the growth of membership, the number of exhibitions steadily increased, without any increase in the rate of subscription.

Season	Year	Member-ship	Exhibi-tions	Sub-scription
1st	1934	350	3	6s.
2nd	1934-5	771	7	12s.
3rd	1935-6	743	8	12s.
4th	1936-7	961	9	12s.
5th	1937-8	1,200	9	12s.
6th	1938-9	1,583	10	12s.

During its history, the T.F.S. has organised a number of public art exhibitions on Tyneside. In September, 1935, it arranged an exhibition of original drawings and transparencies made by Walt Disney. In June 1936, the Society organised what is understood to be a pioneer exhibition of its kind, namely original sketches and paintings by cinema art directors, including work by Alfred Junge, Erno Metzner, Andre Andreiev, and Vincent Korda. In December, 1936, the Society arranged an exhibition of still photographs taken by Mrs. Robert Flaherty, and, in May, 1937, an exhibition of the work of cinema costume designers, sketches and paintings by René Hubert and Ernst Stern.

The Society has also co-operated with various local bodies—the local branch of the Modern Language Association in the provision of French films for local students, with the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Educational Authority in the provision of children's matinées—and has acted generally as a local information bureau on filmic topics.

The last major activity sponsored by the Society prior to the outbreak of war was the Northern Counties Children's Cinema Council, the initiative in which was also taken by the late Ernest Dyer. A copy of the pamphlet published on that occasion will gladly be sent to any interested person, but it may be said briefly that the three chief objects of the Council were:—

1. To foster interest in and to promote the use of the film and other visual aids in education.
2. To encourage the training of film taste and discrimination in children.
3. To act generally as a clearing house of experience in film matters amongst Educational Administrators, Teachers, Parents and Social Workers.

Unfortunately, with the outbreak of war, and the consequent evacuation of school teachers and school children from Tyneside, the work of the Council has temporarily lapsed. This is doubly unfortunate, as the monthly film guide circulated under the auspices of the Council was already beginning to win widespread local support.

The Society has never regarded itself as an esoteric body, but has taken every opportunity that presented itself of improving the quality of films publicly exhibited, either by promising local managers support for "minority" films which they have booked, or, in some cases, by persuading film managers to include specific continental films in their programmes.

The 1939-40 season concluded on June 2nd, on which date the thirteenth exhibition of the season took place. Naturally, no definite plans are being made for the autumn, but like other Film Societies, we hope it will be possible to carry on. A notable event in the Society's history took place last autumn when it was decided to put the Society's affairs on a firm legal footing by converting it into a company limited by guarantee. The present organisation is therefore that the Tyneside Film Society continues to function under its own name, but the management of the Society and its financial control are vested in the members of the Tyneside Film Association Limited, to which members of the Film Society may belong on signing an undertaking to pay 5s. in the event of the Association being obliged to wind up. Any Film Society official who may be interested in this move may have, on application to the Secretary, Tyneside Film Society, care of Literary and Philosophical Society, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1, a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Tyneside Film Association Limited, and a copy of the new Rules of the Tyneside Film Society.

(Editorial Note: At the time of going to press there are no new Foreign Films being shown in London. Reviews will be resumed when and if new films appear.)

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# THE REPERTORY CINEMA TO-DAY

By E. C. ATKINSON

TEN YEARS ago no one could have visualised the many varying types of cinema entertainment which are available to film-goers to-day; one house was then as good as another in the kind of programme it presented.

To-day, however, the public is offered many varieties of cinema entertainment, and there are many different types of programme which it may enjoy. There are the super cinemas with their two big films and a stage show; the average release house showing two features; the specialised hall with its continental film seasons; the repertory cinema offering its own particular policy of one outstanding feature and a selection of documentary and interest shorts, and finally, News Theatres which, of course, are finding an ever-increasing popularity with the public, particularly under present conditions.

Amongst all this vast growth in catering for the entertainment demands of the public, perhaps the most interesting in its indications of the trend of that same public towards discrimination in its choice, is the development of the Repertory Cinema. As far as we can ascertain this was started by Mr S. Seeman, Managing Director of the now popular Classic Group of cinemas, by his introduction of the policy of showing revivals of continental and outstanding productions at the Embassy Cinema, Notting Hill Gate, in the early part of 1933. Since then the repertory cinema has found an enthusiastic and constant following not only in London but also in the large provincial towns.

In examining this development of the repertory cinema it will be found that there are a number of factors which contributed to the particular form of entertainment now provided by the repertory cinema. Firstly, there was that great weakness in the release system of booking, by which any one film is often to be seen in any one district for one week only, and if the film is missed the opportunity to see it is usually gone. The repertory cinema, however, solves this problem and if the film is worthy it will be shown again, although of course it may mean waiting for a few months.

Secondly, there are many films which are for one reason or another, worth seeing again, and, one might say, a number worth seeing again and again. Most filmgoers treasure memories of a film they have seen, and the opportunity to revive those memories, particularly to-day, is a very real desire.

Thirdly, the well-established policy of one good feature and well selected shorts is one that makes for the perfectly balanced programme; in fact, it is not too much to say that the short film has, largely due to this policy, found a special popularity.

Last, but certainly not least, the atmosphere of a repertory cinema is definitely different. Its whole personality is intimate. It is comparatively

small, it is built for comfort and a fostering of attention to the main business—seeing the picture, and hearing it to the best advantage.

Covering a more general field, it is obvious that, to some extent, the policy of the feature houses must be inflexible; that is to say, they are unable to react quickly enough to the desires of the public, whereas the repertory cinema can be a complete reflection of the public's desires. The repertory cinema does not have to book any or every film. Its bookings are largely governed by what its patrons want and what they have expressed a desire to see. In reality the repertories are the spearheads of democracy in the film world, because they listen to the voice of the majority and where possible act upon it.

The repertory cinema performs a very important function: it acts as a film library, and preserves classics of the film world—whether they are classics as far as production, acting,

photography or story-value is concerned; and gives us the opportunity of seeing the work of many of our stars who have changed completely, for example, Deanna Durbin.

The months since the beginning of war have only brought reinforcement of this policy, and have proved more than ever the ability of the repertory cinema to reflect the temper of the people. It can provide "escapism" if the people want it; it can provide "strong meat" too; in fact, whatever the public wants from the past products of the film world can be provided almost immediately, and surely this is of paramount importance in these days of quickly changing moods.

*(The article on London's reception of the Continental Talking Film is unavoidably held over. It is hoped to publish it next month.)*

## DOCUMENTARY BOOKINGS FOR JULY

*(The following bookings for July are selected from a list covering its members supplied by the News and Specialised Theatres Association.)*

<b>African Skyways</b>			
Tatler Theatre, Foregate Street, Chester	13th	<b>Our Fighting Navy</b>	
Tatler News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	27th	World's News Theatre, London	4th
The New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	13th	Victoria Station News Theatre, London	18th
<b>Ancient Roman Monuments</b>		Classic, South Croydon	14th
The New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	6th	<b>Playtime at the Zoo</b>	
<b>Animals on Guard</b>		Cosmo, Glasgow	6th
The New House, Nottingham	27th	<b>Picturesque Udaipur</b>	
<b>Backyard Front</b>		Tatler Theatre, Foregate Street, Chester	20th
News Theatre, City Road, Leeds	27th	<b>Pond Life</b>	
<b>Behind the Guns</b>		The New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	27th
World's News Theatre, London	1st	<b>Point of View No. 5</b>	
<b>Birth of the Year</b>		Cosmo, Glasgow	29th
The News Theatre, Nottingham	13th	Tatler, Liverpool	1st
Victoria Station News Theatre, London	22nd	<b>Point of View No. 6</b>	
<b>Fitness Wins (2)</b>		News Cinema, Aberdeen	6th
Tatler News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	6th	Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	8th
News Theatre, City Road, Leeds	6th	Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	13th
<b>Fitness Wins (3)</b>		<b>Point of View—Odds or Evens</b>	
Tatler News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	20th	News House, Nottingham	13th
News Theatre, City Road, Leeds	20th	<b>Ring of Steel</b>	
<b>Isles of the West</b>		Classic, Southampton	7th
Cosmo, Glasgow	20th	<b>Safety First</b>	
<b>Karoo</b>		The New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	20th
World's News Theatre, London	8th	<b>Sport at the Local</b>	
Classic, Southampton	11th	Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	29th
<b>London</b>		Waterloo Station News Theatre, London	29th
The New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	27th	Classic, Baker Street, London	18th
<b>March of Time No. 2 (Sixth Year)</b>		<b>Squadron 992</b>	
Eros, Piccadilly, London	1st	News Theatre, City Road, Leeds	13th
Waterloo Station News Theatre, London	1st	News Cinema, Aberdeen	13th
Victoria Station News Theatre, London	1st	Tatler News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	6th
Classic, Baker Street, London	11th	Cosmo, Glasgow	13th
<b>March of Time No. 12 (Fifth Year)</b>		Tatler News Reel Cinema, Newcastle	20th
World's News Theatre, London	18th	World's News Theatre, London	11th
Classic, South Croydon	11th	Waterloo Station News Theatre, London	25th
Classic, Southampton	14th	<b>Sydney Eastbound</b>	
<b>March of Time No. 13 (Fifth Year)</b>		Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	15th
Cosmo, Glasgow	25th	<b>The City</b>	
Classic, Baker Street, London	6th	The New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	27th
News Cinema, Aberdeen	13th	<b>The Democratic Way</b>	
<b>March of Time: Canada at War</b>		News Theatre, City Road, Leeds	13th
News House, Nottingham	6th	<b>The Lion has Wings</b>	
<b>March of Time: Dixie 1940</b>		Classic, South Croydon	18th
News House, Nottingham	20th	<b>The Ruins of Palmyra</b>	
<b>March of Time No. 16</b>		Tatler Theatre, Foregate Street, Chester	27th
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	22nd	The New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	20th
<b>Mechanix Illustrated No. 8</b>		Tatler News Reel Cinema, Newcastle	20th
Tatler News Reel Cinema, Newcastle	20th	<b>The Scilly Isles</b>	
<b>Non-Quasi</b>		The New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	27th
World's News Theatre, London	25th	<b>Unconquerable Minesweepers</b>	
Classic, Baker Street, London	14th	Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	15th
<b>Old Blue</b>		Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	22nd
Eros News Theatre, Piccadilly, London	18th	<b>Voice of the Vintage</b>	
		The New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	6th
		<b>Women in Uniform</b>	
		World's News Theatre, London	15th
		Victoria Station News Theatre, London	29th
		Waterloo Station News Theatre, London	22nd



## FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made. F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

**Association of Scientific Workers**, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request, Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

**Austin Film Library**, Longbridge, Birmingham. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**British Commercial Gas Association**, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

**British Council Film Department**, 25 Savile Row, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1940. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses of 100 sound and silent documentary films.

**British Film Institute**, 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library*. An important collection of documentary and other films. Available only to full members of B.F.I. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Some British and Foreign Documentary and other Short Films*. A general list of films and sources. (c) *Early Films*. Films 1896-1934 still available in Britain.

**Coal Utilisation Joint Council**, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Crookes' Laboratories**, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Dartington Hall Film Unit**, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

**Electrical Development Association**, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available only through members of the Association. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Educational General Services**, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

**Empire Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Films primarily of Empire interest. With a useful subject index. 16 mm. & a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Ensign Film Library**, 88-89 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Wide selection of all types of films including fiction, comedies, documentaries, films of geography, animal life, industry. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. & a few Sd. H.

**Film Centre**, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

**The Ford Film Library**, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Gaumont-British Equipments**, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**G.P.O. Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Kodak, Ltd.**, Kingsway, W.C.2. (a) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (b) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

**March of Time**, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Inside Nazi Germany*, *New Schools for Old*, *America Thinks it Over*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Mathematical Films**. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

**Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd.**, Trafford Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Pathescope**, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Petroleum Films Bureau**, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Twenty technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Religious Film Library**, 104 High Holborn, W.C.1. Films of religious and temperance appeal, also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Scottish Central Film Library**, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Sound-Film Services**, 10 Park Place, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work* and Pollard's *Dragon of Wales*. *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Southern Railway**, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

**Strand Film Company**, 5A Upper St. Martin's Lane, W.C.2. Eleven films available for non-theatrical distribution including *Aerial Milestones*, *Chapter and Verse*, *Give the Kids a Break*, and a number of others of Empire and general interest, including 3 silent Airways films. Mostly 35 mm. Sd. A few 16 mm. St. F.

**Wallace Heaton, Ltd.**, 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts. 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Workers' Film Association**, 145 Wardour Street, W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

## CATALOGUE OF THE MONTH

**Pathescope Film Catalogue**, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, London, N.W.2.

Pathescope's catalogue is confined to sound and silent films on 9.5 mm. and is designed to attract the home movie fan. In consequence its lay-out and style is a change indeed from the dry entries in most catalogues. Who would not be tempted to hire *Revelry*, in which "When coming home 'with the milk' a party of revellers descend upon the local sweep and have a fine time with his brushes and his barrow". But it is difficult to know what teachers would make of *Ape-Y-Days*, listed under Natural History. "Mary-Mary, pet chimpanzee of Mr Cherry Kearton . . . entertains you with a few excerpts from her repertoire and invites your company in seeking adventure. Afterwards there is tea and a quiet cigarette. A lovable creature and story all will enjoy". Teachers should not be put off by these sort of entries, for many of the films are good for school use.

It is a pity that the catalogue entries often do not list the stars of the various films, which makes them of less use to the film historian. The catalogue lists a number of good German, French and English films of the twenties. All Walter Forde's early comedies appear to be listed with such remarkable Continental films as *Kean*, *The Chess Player*, *Vaudeville*, *Siegfried*, *Money*, *Kriemhild's Revenge*, *The Spy*, and *La Maternelle* (silent version). The catalogue is strong on American comedies and cartoons, and lists a great number of films by Snub Pollard, the early slap-stick comedian. A unique feature is a large number of 9.5 mm. sound films. Pathescope also issues a monthly supplement giving lists of new films acquired. The current number contains *Master of the World* starring Harry Piel, the famous German acrobatic comedian of silent days, and a number of topical films including the *Bombing of Namsos*.



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# APPRECIATION . . .

"At the Tatler Theatre this week there is being shown a programme of three films which quietly and undemonstratively do something to explain the responsibilities of Empire. The films do not wave flags or point with pride to the vast expanse of the earth's surface which acknowledges the King-Emperor; they go, in their different ways, soberly to work in pointing out how our administrators work hand in hand with the natives to help them with their own problems and to educate them to the end that they may govern themselves. . . ."

THE TIMES, 21st May, 1940

"Three short documentary films well worth looking out for were shown together under the title 'The British Empire', by The Strand Film Company at the beginning of May. In presenting these short films, Strand Films feel that the story of our contribution to civilisation and the arts of peace is surer of an appreciative audience than films giving a 'fiery dramatisation' of the might and splendour of the Empire. . . ."

THE TRIBUNE, 7th June, 1940

" . . . I am most interested to note, however, that this instructive programme will be shown at many cinemas throughout the country shortly. The dissemination of Empire Knowledge through the medium of the film is, I am confident, most effective and should be developed to the utmost to educate the young, particularly, and at the same time counteract Nazi propaganda. . . ."

SIR WILLIAM WAYLAND, M.P., J.P.

(Chairman of the Empire Day Movement)

"THE BRITISH EMPIRE. . . . A Documentary Film Record", a brochure which describes Empire and other productions of the Strand Film Company, can be obtained by readers of "Documentary News Letter" on application to The Publicity Director, The Strand Film Company, 5a Upper St. Martin's Lane, W.C.2.

## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY

DONALD TAYLOR, *Managing Director.* ALEXANDER SHAW, *Director of Productions*

5a UPPER ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.2. Merton Park Studios: 269 KINGSTON ROAD, S.W.19